

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
18 December 1986

FILE ONLY

WASHINGTON

Robert Gates, a Soviet affairs specialist and a National Security Council veteran, is in charge of the CIA and all U.S. intelligence agencies in the absence of ailing Director William Casey, CIA officials said Thursday.

Gates, a native of Kansas, joined the CIA in 1966 and was appointed by Casey as his principal deputy eight months ago.

Casey, 71, director of the CIA since early 1981, underwent surgery to remove a brain tumor Thursday. Officials at Georgetown University Hospital said they were not yet sure how long the intelligence chief would be in the hospital.

Gates, deputy director of the CIA, assumes all of Casey's powers while the director is unable to head the agency, officials said.

NBC News, citing senior administration officials, reported Thursday night that Casey's wife does not want him to return to the CIA.

In addition to directing the CIA, Gates will be responsible for all U.S. intelligence agencies -- including the Defense Intelligence Agency, various intelligence branches of the armed forces, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and intelligence branches of the FBI and all government agencies.

"He has just about the same powers as the director," a CIA spokeswoman said. "When one of them is not there, the other is in charge."

Gates received his bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary in 1965 and a master's degree in history from Indiana University in 1966. He was awarded a doctorate in Russian and Soviet history from Georgetown University in 1974.

Gates was assigned in 1974 to the NSC staff and served nearly six years on the council during the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations. He returned to the CIA in January 1980.